



## HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

### Statement of Subcommittee Chairwoman Martha McSally (R-AZ) Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security

*"Bang for the Border Security Buck: What do we get for \$33 billion?"*

March 15, 2018

Remarks as Prepared

All three branches of our government are now engaged in an attempt to resolve an issue created by the unconstitutional actions of the previous Administration.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, provides legal status for those brought to the United States as minors by executive action. President Trump announced its termination last year with a six-month delay, and, absent recent court rulings, it would have officially ended last week.

For months, many of us in Congress have been working diligently on a lawful solution for the DACA population. However, any solution reached, must ensure that as a nation of laws, we will not repeat the mistakes of the past and end up in the same place discussing this very same issue about another similar population 5, 10, or 15 years down the road.

Border security is a critical pillar of that solution, and is a key part of the compromise proposal offered by President Trump.

As the debate rages on in the media, here in Congress, and especially on this subcommittee, it is our responsibility to fully examine what it will take, both in terms of policy changes, and dollars and cents, to secure our Nation's borders.

To be clear, the federal government's responsibility to secure our borders is independent from a DACA way forward.

In addition to being the chair of this subcommittee, I am one of nine Members of Congress to represent a border district. And my constituents have waited too long for Washington DC to provide the resources, strategy, manpower, and will required to secure the border and stop the cartel activity trafficking through our communities.

It is refreshing to have a President who has the will to do what it takes to provide real border security. Today we are here to talk about what resources are needed and how will they be deployed to get the mission done.

Late last year, in the context of DACA-related negotiations, we asked U.S. Customs and Border Protection leadership to provide Congress with a list of what they needed to adequately secure the border. They responded in early January by delivering a document entitled, *“Critical CBP Requirements to Improve Border Security.”*

This document details major border security investments across four main categories: physical barriers, technology, access, and additional staffing.

In total, this proposal calls for an expenditure of more than \$33 billion dollars over the next ten fiscal years. This is not an insignificant sum of money for an organization whose annual budget is almost \$17 billion dollars.

This request proposes to construct hundreds of miles of new barriers, deploy billions of dollars of new technology, and hire thousands of new agents and officers based on requirements generated from CBP field commanders.

For years, CBP has reiterated the need for the right combination of barriers, technology, and personnel. The reason is simple, the border is complex and there is no “one size fits all” solution. Along all 1,954 miles of border there are wide variations in terrain and threats from urban cores like San Diego and El Paso, to remote rural areas like my district in Arizona.

CBP has put forth a serious proposal to achieve situational awareness and operational control. Most Members of Congress say that they are committed to securing the border, and if that is the case, we have an obligation to carefully and thoughtfully consider what CBP has requested to get the job done.

I would encourage the Members of the subcommittee to listen to the justifications for these expenditures given by career professionals, like Deputy Commissioner Vitiello (VE-TELL-O) and Agent Brandon Judd, who have worked the border and know first-hand the challenges we are up against.

We know that the border is not secure – gangs and trafficking organizations exploit it every day. And it is not just border communities that are threatened by these bad actors, Americans across the country are affected by the illicit activity traversing our borders.

We have a unique opportunity to change the status quo on the border. The proposal offered by CBP is a solid framework.

I want to be clear, real border security is more than just a border wall system, technology, and personnel. It also includes aspects of our immigration policy.

Ensuring that illicit border crossers are promptly removed from the country discourages others from illegally crossing in the future, and sends the message that our Nation’s laws will be enforced.

Unfortunately, there are too many loopholes in our current immigration system that are used on a daily basis to thwart the hard work done by the men and women of CBP and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Those loopholes must also be closed.

I worked over the last 6 months with Chairmen McCaul, Goodlatte and Representative Labrador to craft legislation that closes these loopholes and authorizes this critical funding for border security in a trust fund, to ensure the mission is complete and future Congresses can't halt the progress.

Our bill, called the Secure America's Future Act, includes other important provisions of ending chain migration and the visa lottery, cracking down on sanctuary cities, Kate's Law, and a bill I previously introduced to go after cartel scouts who sit on hilltops and direct cartel activity, often with better equipment than our agents.

It also provides a path forward for DACA recipients. We are working to bring our bill to the floor of the House for a vote.

I have called today's hearing because I want to dive deep into the details of the CBP request on border security and help the American people understand what border security return on investment could be realized if this strategy is fully funded.

Agents and Officers of U.S. Customs and Border Protection work every single day to secure our Nation, often in rugged terrain, dangerous situations, and in very remote areas far away from the amenities of modern life.

We owe it to them to give them the tools and resources that support their ability to gain and maintain situational awareness and operational control of the border.

I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses today.

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